No 776 July 25, 2004

THE FUNDAY TIMES

Cat's whiskers
One reader can win a Garfield screening for themselves and 30 of their mates
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Prince's party
Find out which performers rocked at Capital FM's Party in the Park
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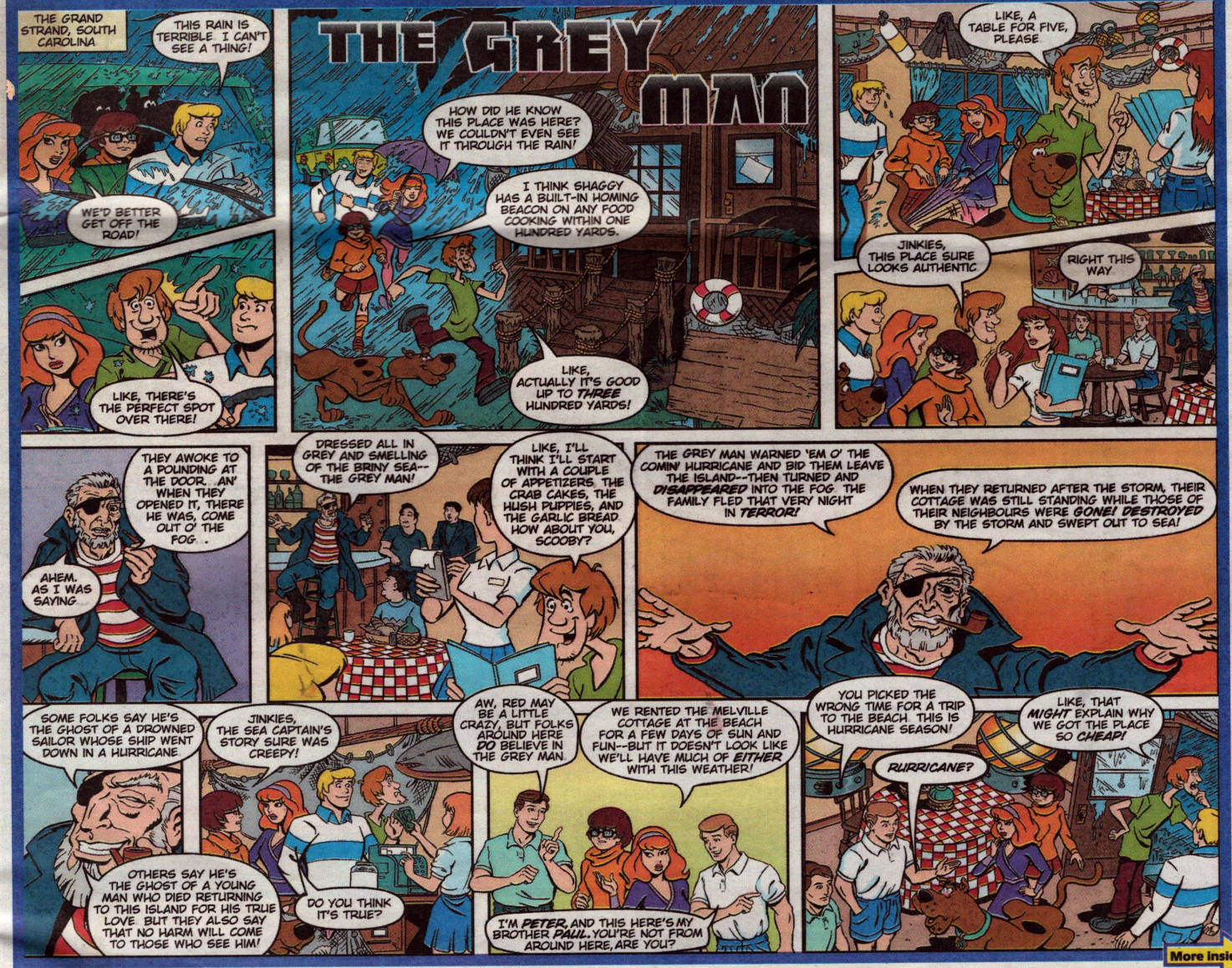
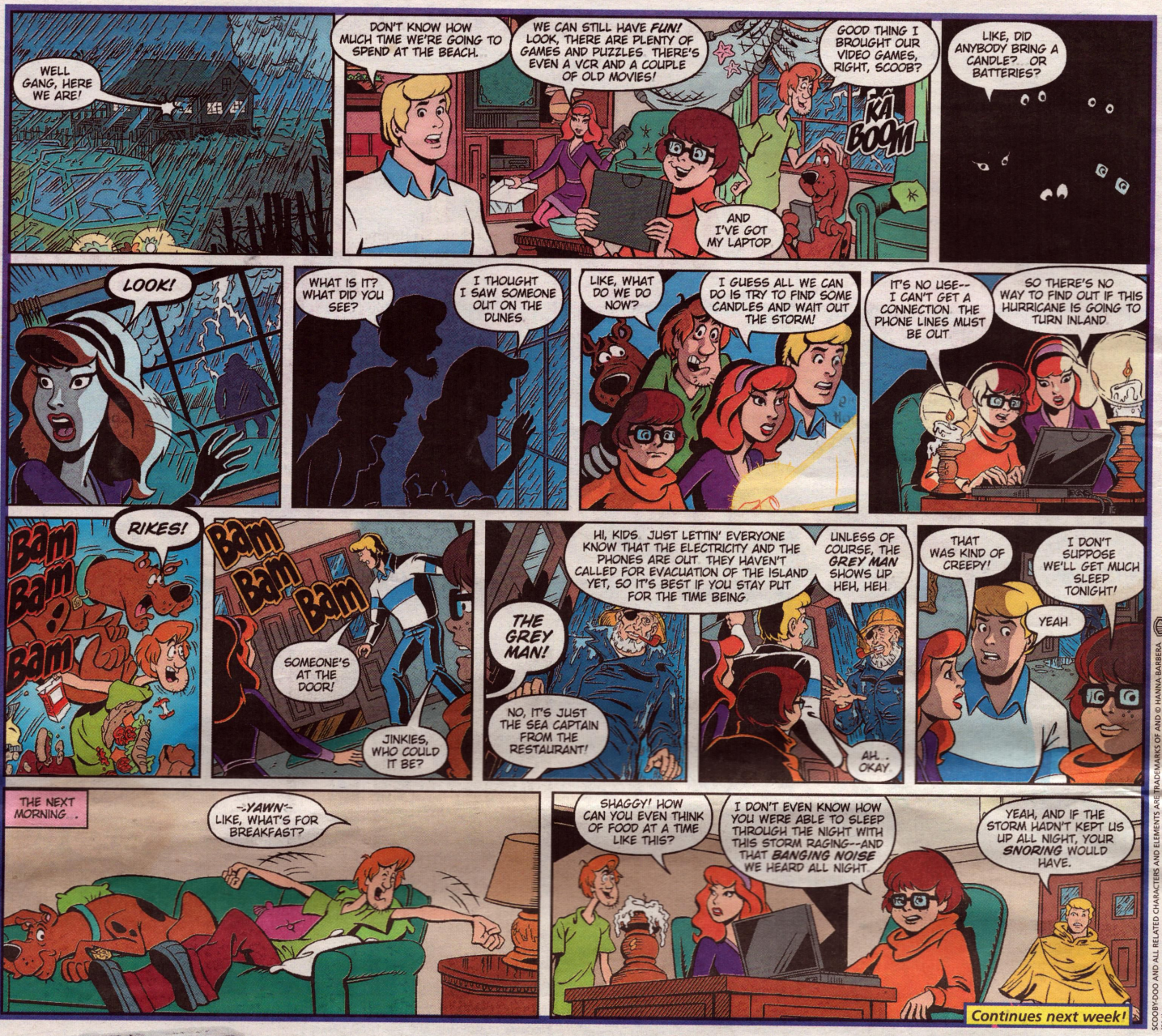
Now boarding
Funday Air takes off today to explore its first destination – Italy
Page 11

SCOOBY-DOO! in THE GREY MAN



More inside



SCOOBY-DOO AND ALL RELATED CHARACTERS AND ELEMENTS ARE TRADEMARKS OF AND © HANNA-BARBERA. (S04)

SAY CHEESE

Peter Parker isn't the only photographer set for big things this summer as Funday needs you to send in your sizzling snaps. The reader that sends the photo that we deem to be perfect picture wins a nifty Nikon Coolpix 2200 digital camera. Designed to make picture-taking fast and simple, the 2200 has 15 handy scene modes, a blur warning function and a large storage memory. Plus, four runners-up will each collect a Nikon AF250SV compact camera, which features an extra-large viewfinder and a wide-angle 28mm lens.

So send us photos of your holiday destinations, favourite activities, friends or family – or even a pic of yourself just lovin' the summer break! Mark your entry SUMMER SNAPS and send it to Funday, 1 Pennington Street, London E98 1ST. Or e-mail your picture, making sure it's at least 300dpi, to funday-times@funday-times.co.uk. Please include your name, age, address and home telephone number on the back of any photos. Sorry, but we can't return any pictures that are sent.

Nikon

THE FUNDAY TIMES

COMPETITIONS

Send answers to all competitions to us at: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU95 1AY or funday.comps@sunday-times.co.uk [only one e-mail per entrant please]
Competition deadline: August 4
Entrants to Funday competitions must be 16 and under.

F-MAIL

Send your letters, cartoons, jokes and drawings to: The Funday Times, PO Box 5073, Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GX or funday.times@sunday-times.co.uk

NOT RECEIVED YOUR PRIZE?

Please telephone 020 7711 1521 or e-mail custserv@fundaytimes.co.uk

GOT A NEWS STORY?

Please telephone 020 7782 7415 or e-mail funday.news@sunday-times.co.uk

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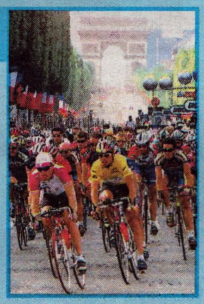
Trust Scooby and Shaggy to feel hungry!

7 DAYS

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD THIS WEEK

TODAY



The Tough Guy Nettle Warrior VII competition takes place in Perton, Staffordshire. This gruelling 9.7km-long assault course includes obstacles such as Gurkha Jungle Swamps and Dead Leg Brook • It's the final stage of the Tour de France which finishes at the Champs Élysées in Paris. It's tradition for riders to allow the winning cyclist, in the yellow jersey, to herald his victory by crossing the line first.

THURSDAY

The BBC Jazz Awards are handed out in London. Guest presenters include Amy Winehouse and Katie Melua [right] • The Weetabix Women's British Open, the biggest women's golf tournament in the UK, gets underway at Sunningdale in Berkshire. Fourteen-year-old American amateur star Michelle Wie is a competitor.

MONDAY

Sing It Back songsters Moloko release their 11,000 Clicks DVD. Filmed on the Statues tour, it features 110 minutes of live footage • On this day in 1953, Fidel Castro led 200 rebels in a coup against Cuba's dictator. It's now the most important date in the Cuban revolutionary calendar.

FRIDAY

The Admiral Cardiff Big Weekend is the UK's biggest free outdoor festival, with more than 250,000 visitors. Attractions over the next three days include live music, fireworks and the UK's largest travelling funfair • More than 100 teams from around the world compete at the International Cheerleading Championships in Nottingham. Groups from Thailand, India and Greece will show off their cradles, tumbling and pyramids.

TUESDAY

Rat, Mole, Badger and Toad take over the Open Air Theatre in London's Regent Park with a musical version of The Wind in the Willows which runs until August 21 • It's Sleepyhead Day in Finland. Lazy people are taken from their beds and thrown in the sea to wake them up!

SATURDAY

The Buckingham Palace State Rooms open to visitors until September 26. Clothes, photographs and manuscripts will be on display and an audio tour will include music specially composed for the Royal Family • The annual National Eisteddfod of Wales begins today at Newport's Tredegar Park.

WEDNESDAY

The Sandringham Flower Show in Norfolk is the place for beautiful blooms • The Third Geneva Convention was signed by 48 countries on this day, 75 years ago. It detailed how prisoners of war should be treated by their captors.

PICTURES: CARL BENTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES, REUTERS/WILL BURGESS/STEPHEN HIRD, TONY ROSS, AP/ALASTAIR GRANT, EPA, PA/ANDREW PARSONS

NEWS

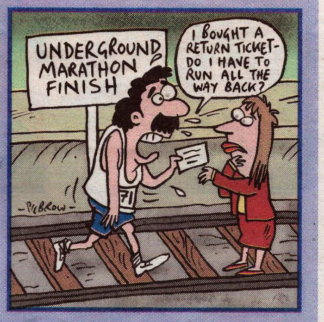
TO THE MAX

Usually theme parks are keen to promote their latest thrill rides, but this month Blackpool Pleasure Beach has been celebrating its oldest attraction. Sir Hiram Maxim's Flying Machine took its maiden flight 100 years ago and is the only one of its kind still working in the UK. Sir Hiram, who also invented the automatic machine gun, built the ride to raise funds for his own aviation experiments. He holds the record for piloting the largest aeroplane to lift itself off the ground in the 19th century. Sir Hiram managed to travel 30m before landing with a thud.

SMALL FRY

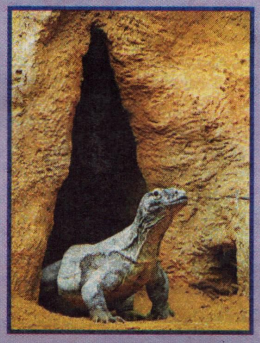
If you think sardines look small, check out this tiny tiddler. Scientists in Australia claim to have discovered the world's smallest fish, the male stout infantfish, which grows to just 7mm in length. The stout infantfish has no teeth, fins or scales and is actually little more than a backbone with eyes. The current record-holder, the dwarf goby, has an average length of 8.6mm. Weighing just 1mg, the stout infantfish is also as heavy as one three-thousandth of a ping pong ball! The mini marvel is found mainly in coral reefs and lives for just two months.

TRAIN TO WIN



Eight Spanish athletes completed a marathon in Madrid earlier this month. There weren't many spectators cheering them on – but since the race was underground, it's not surprising. The athletes ran the 26.2 miles along the Spanish capital's number 12 underground route which circles the southern part of the city. The marathon took place at night after the trains had stopped running, although one did follow the runners to give them extra light.

DRAGON'S LAIR



London Zoo is now home to a razor-toothed, toxic-mouthed Komodo dragon. The world's largest lizard, which has been known to devour humans, is endangered in its native Indonesia so the zoo is setting up a conservation programme to aid the reptile's plight. "Without conservation efforts to protect them, these giant lizards have a very uncertain future," said Richard Gibson, of the Zoological Society of London. A Komodo dragon can grow more than 3m long, weigh 250kg and has saliva which contains more than 50 types of bacteria.

WORDWISE

.....PHRASEBOOK.....

Going abroad this summer? This week: the basics

Pronunciation note: a vowel + ñ makes a nasal sound; you should breathe out through your nose as well as your mouth when you say it

Hi ...

French Salut "*saloo*"
Italian Ciao "*chow*"
Spanish Hola "*o-la*"
Portuguese Olá "*oh-la*"

Please ...

French S'il vous plaît "*seel voo pleh*"
Italian Per favore "*payr fa-voray*"
Spanish Por favor "*por fabor*"
Portuguese Por favor "*poor fa-vor*"

Yes ...

French Oui "*wee*"
Italian/Spanish Sì/Sí "*see*"
Portuguese Sim "*seeñ*"

No ...

French Non "*noñ*"
Italian/Spanish No "*no*"
Portuguese Não "*nowñ*"

Thanks ...

French Merci "*mehrsee*"
Italian Grazie "*grats-yay*"
Spanish Gracias "*grath-yas*"
Portuguese
[if you're a girl]
Obrigada "*oh-breegah-duh*"
[if you're a boy]
Obrigado "*oh-breegah-doo*"

Collins dictionaries and phrasebooks are priced from £3.99

Collins

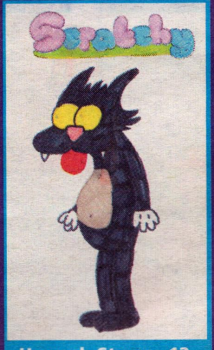
f-mail

KNIGHT FEVER

Out on Monday, Batman – The Animated Series is available on DVD for the first time in the UK with two top Caped Crusader releases. The Legend Begins and Tales of the Dark Knight [cert PG] both feature action-packed episodes and extras, revealing secrets about this acclaimed animation. The star f-mailer will receive The Legend Begins and Tales of the Dark Knight on DVD, a DVD player and a goody bag– including action figures and vehicles. The other f-mailers will each win the two DVDs.

STAR

Dear f-mail,
I have been low on money recently so I've been looking for cheaper ways to spend my summer. I have been cycling, discovered I have a talent for painting and spent time with friends and family in the park – doing things such as playing football and feeding ducks – which I hadn't done since I was a toddler. I have had lots of fun and already have a tan! These days, I think we spend too long lazing about inside. Kids should leave their wallets at home and find fun outside like me!
Ian Pearce, via e-mail



Hannah Storey, 12, Dorset

What do you get if you cross the sun with a toad?
Star Warts!

How many skunks does it take to make a big stink?
A phew!

What's the difference between a buffalo and a bison?
You can't wash your hands in a buffalo!

Abi Roswell, Great Yarmouth

SLACK CAT

Actress Jennifer Love Hewitt tells Funday about starring alongside the world's laziest feline in new flick, Garfield The Movie

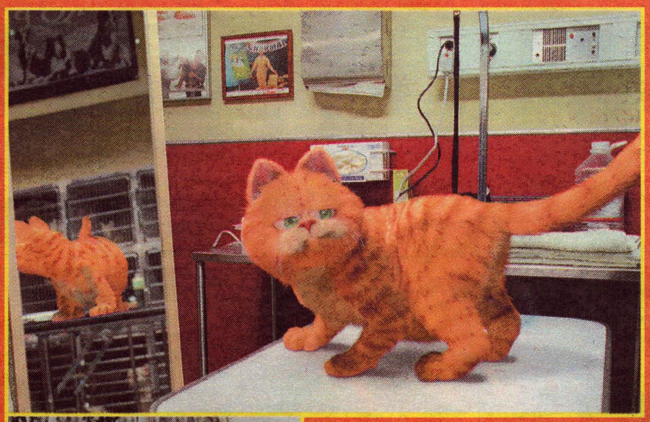
Jennifer, is it true you had a ginger cat that you wanted to call Garfield as a youngster?
It's partly true. I was a huge Garfield fan when I was a kid and I did have a ginger cat, who I loved very much, but his name was Chester. I never wanted to call him Garfield, even though he did remind of Garfield because he was on the large side.

Was he as lazy and sarcastic as Garfield?
I don't know about being sarcastic because he never talked to me, thank goodness. I think I'd still be in therapy now if he had. But he was definitely very fat and lazy.

Are you similar to Garfield in any way?
Everybody is like Garfield. If I could be lying on the couch right now, watching television, eating good food and saying whatever I wanted to about anything and getting away with it, that would be an ideal situation. That would be awesome. And to have nobody pick on me for it but love me for my big, beautiful, cynical, sarcastic self; that would be great. So yes, I think there's a little bit of Garfield in all of us.

When you had to act opposite a large ginger cat that isn't actually there. What was going through your mind?
Oh, I just felt ridiculous. I kept wondering if the film crew were looking at me and thinking: "Does she talk to herself when she's at home?" Thankfully I had very little of that to do compared with Breckin [Meyer, who plays Garfield's owner, Jon]. He had to constantly act like he was carrying him around and feeding him breakfast and cuddling him in bed. I had such a good time making fun of him having to do all that stuff.

Did you practise in front of the mirror?
Ha! I absolutely did not. I'd have looked like a crazy person. I tried to think back to when I had an imaginary friend as a kid and how I acted with them.



Garfield co-stars Jennifer, Breckin and Odie the dog

Do you love lasagne like Garfield?
I do, and I tried lasagne for the first time because of Garfield.

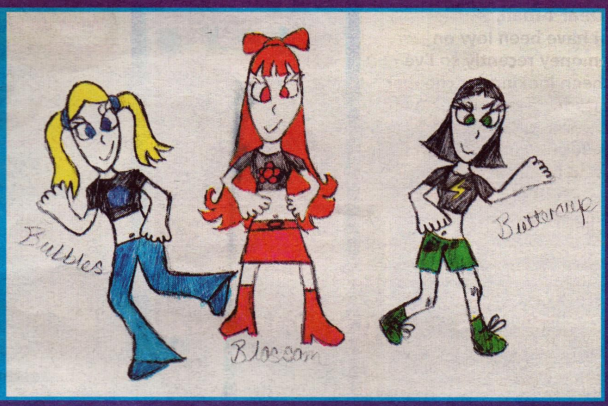
What pets do you have now?
I have a dog, a chihuahua. I took him to the film set when I could. He had a great time playing with Odie.

Who is your favourite cartoon cat apart from Garfield?
No offence to Garfield, but when I was younger there was always a competition about who was cooler: Heathcliffe or Garfield. I thought it was really, really cool that Heathcliffe lived in a junkyard. I thought that would be great, to be a cat and live in a junkyard and have cool cars and cool friends. Garfield always won though because he had a sense of humour. But my favourite cartoon character ever is Spongebob Squarepants. If Spongebob was a cat, forget it.

Garfield The Movie [cert U] is out on Friday

PICTURES TWENTIETH CENTURY FOX

Dear f-mail,
Ever since I was little, I've wanted to be a cartoonist. So I've drawn this picture of the Powerpuff Girls as teenagers!
Grace Kaluba, 11, Streatham



Dear f-mail,
School is only just breaking up for the summer but every time I go to the shops with my mum, there are notices up saying Back to School, advertising all the new uniform and pencils for the next year. It really gets on my nerves. I just want to relax and I don't want to get stressed out about going into a new class in September. The shops are trying to get our parents to spend money now, but they should remember that we will be customers soon as well, and I certainly won't go into any shops that have been so thoughtless to children.
Jamie Francis, 10, via e-mail

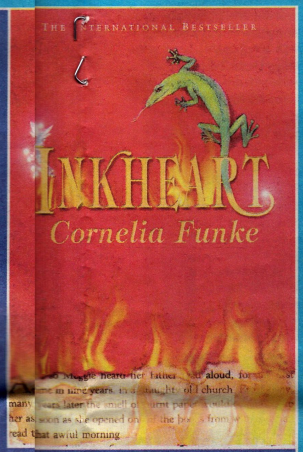
Connor Warn, 9, Letchworth Garden City

SOMETHING TO DECLARE

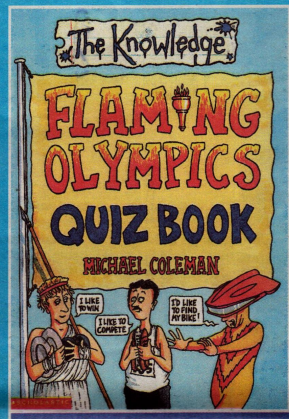
Need a passport to reading pleasure this summer? Damian Kelleher gives these books the special Funday stamp of approval!

Knapsack Guide to ... Disneyland Resort Paris [Knapsack Publishing, £4.99]
Going to Disneyland Paris this summer? Then make sure you slip a copy of this into your backpack. It contains everything you need to find your way around the theme park with all the rides rated, shows reviewed, parade info and lots, lots more. There's even a day planner at the back to make sure you make the most of your stay. It's Disneyland Paris sorted!

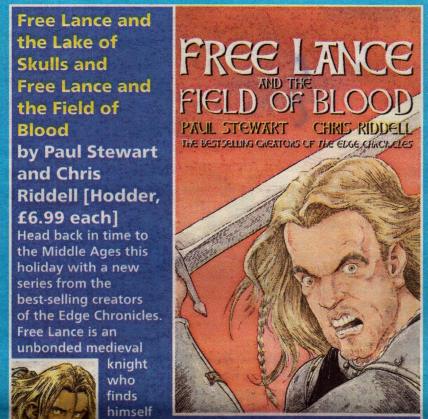
The Star of Kazan by Eva Ibbotson [Macmillan, £12.99]
Fans of Eva's last novel, Journey to the River Sea, will be glad to know she's back – and on top form. A baby is found abandoned in a church in the Austrian Alps at the end of the 19th century. She is discovered by two servants, who take the child home to their house in Vienna where they work for three eccentric professors. The story follows the astonishing story of Annika and her strange surrogate family – until one day, her true mother returns. An amazing adventure that will launch you into a Viennese whirl!



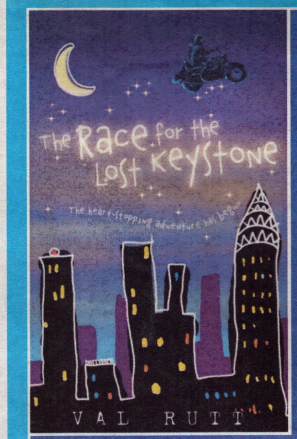
Inkheart by Cornelia Funke [Chicken House, £6.99]
Cornelia is Germany's answer to JK Rowling, and her latest book [remember The Thief Lord?] will not disappoint. It's all about Meggie and her father Mo who love books and stories. Then one night, a stranger comes knocking at their door and they discover a secret to turn their world upside-down and inside out! If you love reading, you'll want to dive into this and lose yourself for the summer.



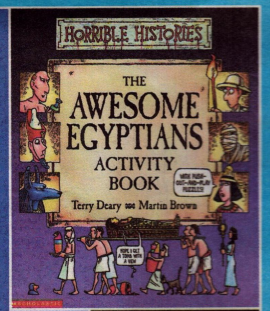
Flaming Olympics Quiz Book by Michael Coleman [Scholastic, £4.99]
Sport is coming home this summer as the most famous games on earth return to their homeland, Greece. For fans of trivia, this quiz book is a mind-boggling collection of fantastic facts and quiz questions that could test even an Olympic Games genius to the limit. For instance, did you know that in 1956, US weightlifter Charles Vinci found himself 200 grams too heavy for his event, but a quick haircut helped him lose weight with just 15 minutes to go. And boy was he glad – he went on to win gold!

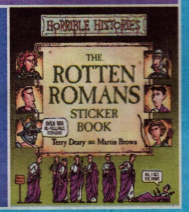


Free Lance and the Lake of Skulls and Free Lance and the Field of Blood by Paul Stewart and Chris Riddell [Hodder, £6.99 each]
Head back in time to the Middle Ages this holiday with a new series from the best-selling creators of the Edge Chronicles. Free Lance is an unbonded medieval knight who finds himself on some thrill-a-minute quests that are fraught with danger. They may be short on words but these great little books are jam-packed with excitement and double-dealing thrills. Make some room in your case for these.



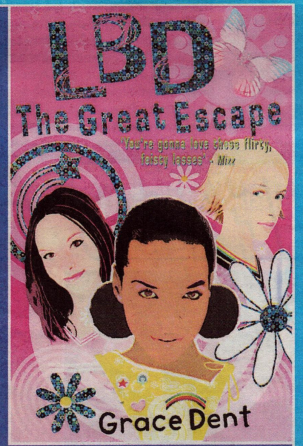
The Race for the Lost Keystone by Val Rutt [Puffin, £4.99]
New author Val Rutt is creating quite a stir with her excellent first novel – and when you read it you'll know why. This all-action page-turner tells what happens to Phil and Kate Reynolds when their chocoholic Great Aunt Elizabeth turns up on a Harley-Davidson! Whisked abroad for the school holidays, the children encounter talking animals and arch-villain Lorabeth Lampton who plots world domination from her cosmetics empire HQ. Phil and Kate soon discover that adventure needs a government health-warning when Lorabeth is involved!



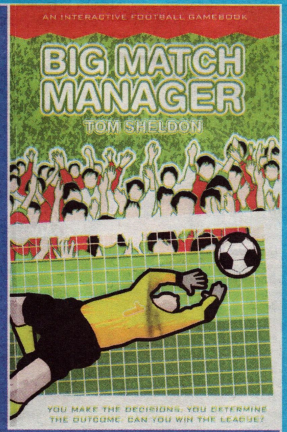


Horrible Histories: The Rotten Romans Sticker Book and The Awesome Egyptians Activity Book [Scholastic, £3.99 each]
Here's something horribly enjoyably to get stuck into this summer. If you find Horrible Histories remind you a little too much of school, these new activity books could be just what your holiday is crying out for! Packed with putrid puzzles and foul facts, they're just the thing to keep the old grey matter ticking over during the holidays. And when you get back to school and find yourself top in history, you'll know why!

Bollywood Babes by Narinder Dhami [Corgi Yearling, £4.99]
Amber, Jazz and Geena, the sussed sisters, still have their interfering aunty on the case, but this time she's met her match in the shape of Bollywood legend Molly Mahal. It seems Molly can charm everyone – from hunky school teacher Mr Arora to their own dad! But like all BIG stars, she has another side that's not nearly as attractive as her fans might believe. This hilarious romp is just what you need to bring a touch of exotic glamour to your summer hols.



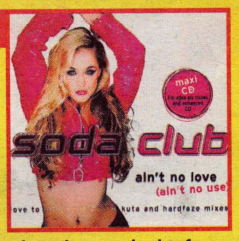
LBD: The Great Escape by Grace Dent [Puffin, £4.99]
They're back – and this time Les Bambinos Dangereuses [alias Ronnie, Fleur and Claude] have the sell-out Astlebury Festival on their minds. Only trouble is, they haven't got tickets and what chance do they have of getting permission from their parents? A great follow-up to LBD: It's a Girl Thing, this feel-good frenzy of pop, hunks and interfering parents packs more laughs per page than a hyena ho-down. Bliss.



Big Match Manager by Tom Sheldon [Bloomsbury, £5.99]
Think you could have done a better job than Sven-Goran Eriksson at Euro 2004? Can't wait for the new season to kick off? Here's the answer – grab yourself this kicking interactive football gamebook where you are the manager. If you make all the right decisions you can steer Hardwick City to the top of the league. But you've also got to track down top player Danny Knox – and he's been kidnapped! Fast paced and really good fun, this is great to get stuck into while you're waiting at the airport or lying on the beach.

FRESH! THIS WEEK

SINGLE

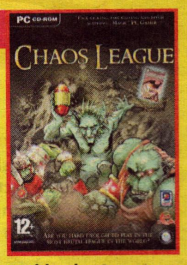


AIN'T NO LOVE
Soda Club
Production combo Soda Club have taken another old dance track and re-worked it for the 21st century, this time featuring vocals by 16-year-old actress and singer Ashley Jade. It's bound to be a hit, since the original song is so catchy and uplifting. This remix isn't very imaginative, but Ashley's powerful vocals give it new strength.

DVD

SEVENTEEN AGAIN [cert 12]
Sister Sister stars Tia and Tamara Mowry star with their younger brother Tahj in his lightweight fantasy adventure. Willie [Tahj] turns his grandparents back into teenagers – leading to yucky scenes you just wouldn't want to see, such as your granny dating again! Fun but flimsy.

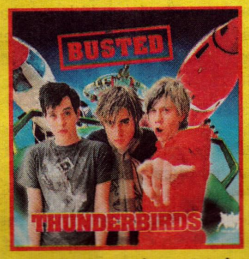
PC CD-ROM



CHAOS LEAGUE
Role-playing fantasy meets American football is the best way to describe Chaos League, as you captain a team of ogres, dwarves and barbarians in a do-or-die ball game. It's pretty hard to get your head around at first but its monster mayhem gameplay and dark look keep you on side.

SINGLE

THUNDERBIRDS ARE GO! Busted
Cleverly combining the original Thunderbirds theme tune into a power-packed Busted track, the boys have created another winner. The chorus takes its time to get to the point, but it's worth the wait – just to hear the lads yell "Thunderbirds are go!" before the guitars thrash and the track lifts off again. The Thunderbirds producers should count themselves lucky to have a theme song this good.



TOY

BRATZ WILD LIFE SAFARI!
Who would have thought the fashion-conscious Bratz would be getting dirty in the jungle? But they are, and as you'd expect, they do it in style. With khaki colours and leopard-striped patterns, these limited-edition dolls really have a different look to the usual Bratz gear. We're wild about them!

SINGLE

GUILTY
The Rasmus
Ready to rock? Then brace yourself for the guitar-heavy onslaught of a new single from The Rasmus. This is the follow-up to their UK debut hit, In the Shadows. The rockers from Finland might look scary but their rock music is a lot more friendly than you'd expect. Heavy, but not nasty, and loud yet strangely tuneful.

DVD

TRANSFORMERS: ROBOTS IN DISGUISE: VOLUME ONE [cert U]
Optimus Prime leads the Autobots against Megatron and his evil Predacon hordes in this action-packed eight-episode DVD. It's full of crash, bang, wallop as the robots use their inventive weapons and battle modes to maximum effect.

SINGLE

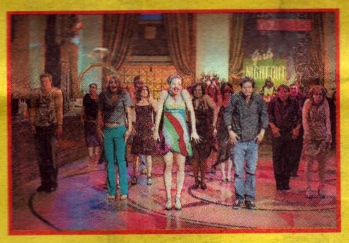
BEEN AROUND THE WORLD Zena
Originally the fourth member of Mis-Teeq, Zena left the band when they adopted a pop-garage sound to pursue her R&B dreams alone. The years of hard work are now paying off with this soulful summery track, featuring Jamaican dancehall star Vybz Kartel. Zena should be assured of a solo hit, and Vybz gives this laid-back R&B song a great urban flavour.

STATIONERY

CRAYOLA CANDY MEGA MIX
Doodling will never be easier during the summer with the pens and pencils in this Candy Mega Mix [£9.99]. Included are Smellys [scented pens] and Sparklers [with glittery ink] plus a three-in-one stamper, which offer a colourful variety to an otherwise standard set.

FILM

13 GOING ON 30 [cert 12A]
Ever wished you were all grown up? This romantic comedy sees Jennifer Garner magically transform from being 13 to 30 – with rib-tickling results. Some of the comedy is hit and miss but the Thriller dance scene [below] is not to be missed. While not laugh-a-minute, this has old skool charm.



GOOD OK BAD

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WIN IT!

HERE'S GARFIELD

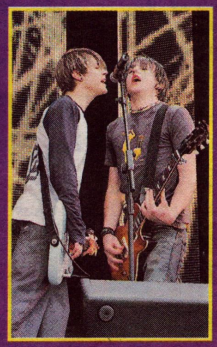
Garfield the cat loves lazing around, watching TV, eating lasagne ... and lazing around some more. Luckily for him, in his new live-action/CGI film, Garfield The Movie [cert U], his owner Jon lets him rule the house. That is until Jon brings home dim-witted dog Odie, and Garfield finds himself shut out on the porch. But when Odie attracts the attention of an evil dog-napper, will the fat cat get off his big behind to save his new furry housemate? Find out in this fun family film, starring Breckin Meyer and Jennifer Love Hewitt. It's the cat's whiskers!

PARTY ON

We join the crowds at London's Hyde Park to enjoy 95.8 Capital FM's Party In The Park for The Prince's Trust

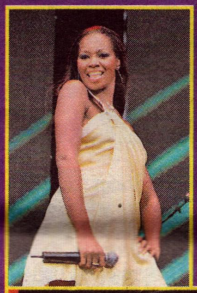
WHO SANG?

Will Young • Nelly Furtado • Busted • Alanis Morissette • The Calling • McFly • Sugababes • Avril Lavigne • Darren Hayes • Beverly Knight • Sean Paul • The Corrs • Blue • Natasha Bedingfield • Anastacia • Lemar • Lenny Kravitz • Jamelia • Lionel Ritchie, Matt Goss and Peter Andre



Sunday, July 11, saw 100,000 people gather in Hyde Park to watch the world's largest music gig, 95.8 Capital FM's Party in the Park for The Prince's Trust. Despite the grey skies, it remained dry as everybody enjoyed performances by some of the biggest names in music.

Girls in the crowd swooned when Blue sang a medley of their hits, including new single Bubblin'. While Natasha Bedingfield, Nelly Furtado and Anastacia wowed the park with their amazing voices, which sounded even better blasting from one of the loudest sound systems on Earth. Both McFly and Busted sent fans wild, with their energy-charged stints, and Sean Paul's infectious dancehall songs got everybody up on their feet dancing.



A soulful set from Lemar proved that he can hack it alongside more seasoned stars, and The Calling professed Party in the Park to be: "the best gig in the world, in the best country in the world." Backstage, Funday spotted Geri Halliwell looking nervous about her TV presenting duties on Five, while pet dog Harry enjoyed himself, sniffing through used chip wrappers!

WHAT'S IT FOR?

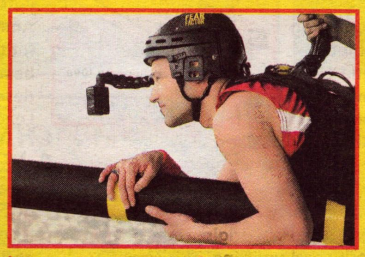
Party in the Park is a fundraising event, but how is the money used? Last year, the work of The Prince's Trust aided:

- 5,600 youngsters at risk of exclusion through 467 clubs at school
- 4,359 young people to start their own business
- 541 groups of people gain skills through community projects

PICTURES: PA/ANDY BUTTERTON ©RAFAEL WOLLMANN/GETTY IMAGES

FACING FEAR

Funday meets radio DJ Toby Anstis as he faces his fears in the terrifying TV show, Celebrity Fear Factor



Hi Toby, tell us about this new show you're featuring in

I've just finished shooting Celebrity Fear Factor in Buenos Aires [in Argentina]. It's a show where each week, two teams of three celebrities push each other to the limit of their fears. We have to complete scary stunts in order to win money for charity.

A bit like the tasks on I'm A Celebrity ... Get Me Out Of Here?

No, these stunts are much bigger and worse. I can't go into too much detail, but I can say there was an element of freefalling 150m in our first stunt. That's like falling off London's BT Tower. If you're afraid of heights, it isn't funny at all.

Were you scared?

We were put under incredible mental and physical pressure. The first stunt was petrifying – we were green with fear. I say it was a freefall, but there was a lot more to it than that.

What usually scares you?

Things such as creepy crawlies don't freak me out, but raw meat does! Heights petrify me too, so I had to conquer that for the first stunt. As a result I've come back feeling much more confident about heights. I've got a real buzz about that.

Do you believe people should face their fears?

Not necessarily. You're only frightened of something if you're actually experiencing it, so if you're scared of heights don't go up high things. Buy a bungalow and don't go up the Eiffel Tower when you're in Paris.

Celebrity Fear Factor UK is on Sky One, Sundays, at 9pm

LIVE REVIEW

THE TRUTH TOUR, Usher, Wembley Arena

With many artists miming their way through generic gigs these days, it's refreshing to witness something completely different. Usher's live show rivals those of the world's greatest performers, as he cavorts for two solid hours with an all-live performance. And what a performance. Non-fans will be surprised at how many hits the R&B star has notched up ... and they sound even better live.

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To celebrate the release of Garfield The Movie on July 30, Twentieth Century Fox is offering an exclusive screening to one lucky Funday reader.

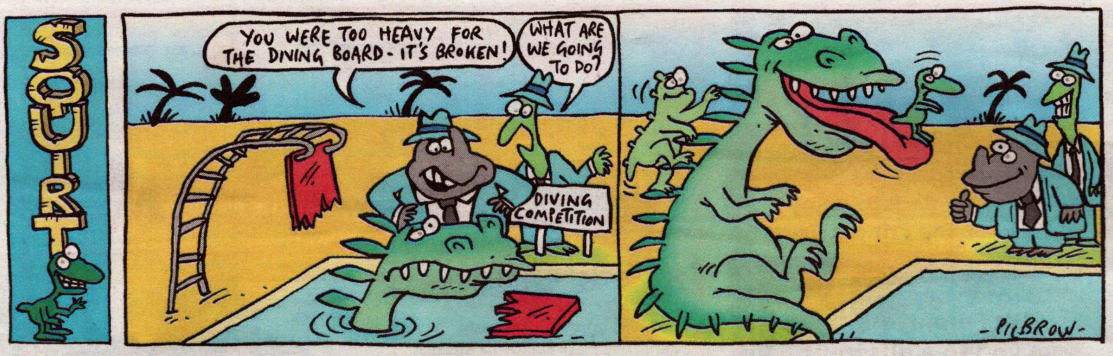
Taking place at the winner's local cinema, up to 30 friends and family members can be invited along. To top it all, the prize also includes a meal for everyone, after the private screening, at their nearest Pizza Hut – where everyone will also receive a Pizza Hut Garfield goody bag, which includes exciting games and activities and a pair of cool Garfield shades. The winner also gets an extra Garfield rucksack crammed with goodies.

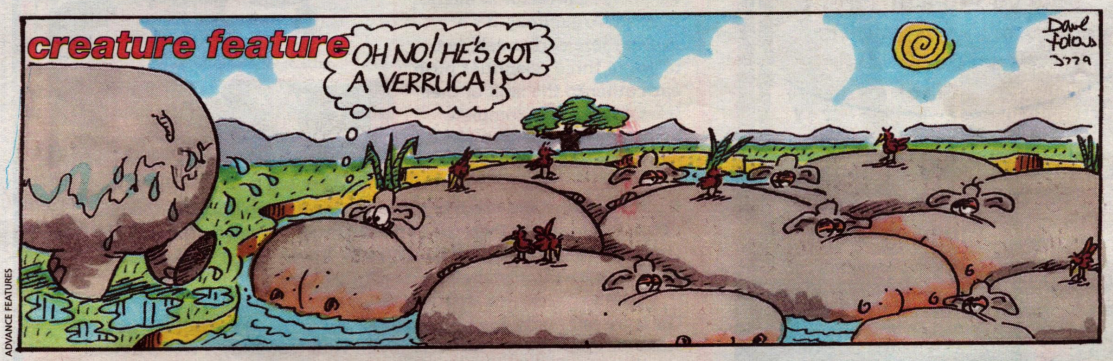
Plus, 10 runners-up will receive a Garfield goodie bag, containing an umbrella, a metal carry-box, a wallet and lots more.

To enter, tell us which famous American actor provides the voice of Garfield in the movie.

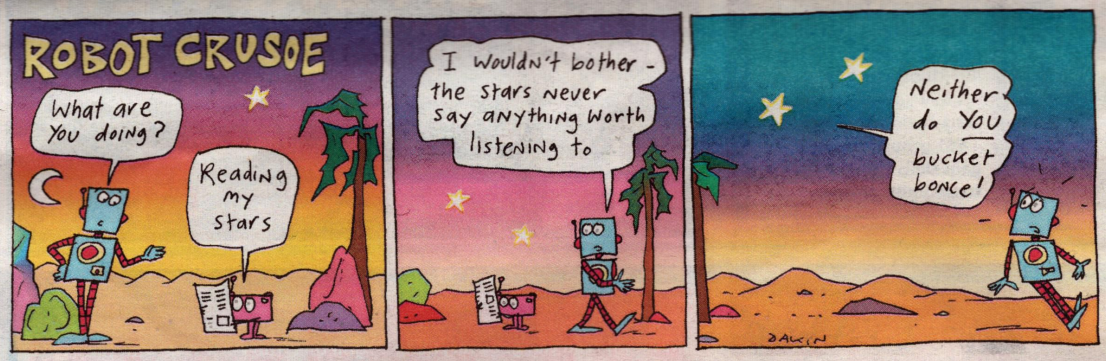
Mark your entry GARFIELD and send it with your name, age, address and home telephone number, to the competition address on page 2.

Normal TNL competition rules apply to all Funday Times competitions

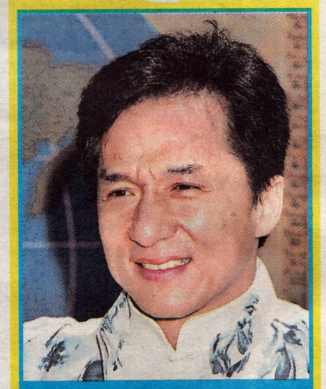




ADVANCE FEATURES



QF QUICKFIRE



PICTURE PA

JACKIE CHAN

How tidy was your room when you left this morning?

It wasn't too bad. I'm staying in a hotel, but before I left, I tidied up and made the bed. At school they trained us to be tidy and I like to make an effort.

What CD are you listening to right now?

I like romantic songs, but the singers I listen to, you wouldn't know. They're like the Chinese Celine Dion or Whitney Houston.

Which TV programmes do you catch if you can?

Anything on The Discovery Channel, National Geographic and The History Channel is great. I love documentaries about animals, technology or history.

Who's the most intriguing celebrity you've ever met?

I met the Cambodian Prime Minister through my charity work. He was very interesting and had so many stories to tell. He has something like 2,000 bodyguards around him and has been in so many battles.

What's your secret geeky thing?

You wouldn't believe how many collections I've got! I collect stamps, padlocks, bracelets and statues. I've also got a spoon collection and more than 1,200 antique cups and saucers.

Which other profession would you like to try?

I'd like to save people. When I was young I wanted to be a policeman, but now I'd rather be a fireman or in the special forces.

What's your motto for life?

That's simple... work hard and help people.

DESTINATION: ITALY

Let Funday Air take you to a different country every week. Today we're off to Italy ... Ciao!

WHERE ARE WE?

Italy is made up of the Italian peninsular and two large islands, called Sicily and Sardinia. Two tiny independent states lie within Italy's borders the Republic of San Marino and Vatican City – the smallest state in the world!

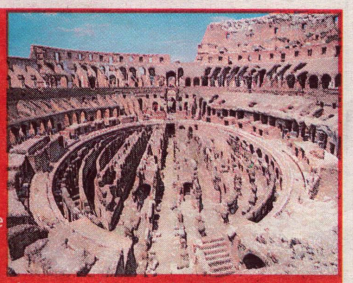
FACT FILE

Full name: Repubblica Italiana [Italian Republic]
Capital: Rome
Major cities: Milan, Naples, Turin
Currency: Euro [formerly Lira]
Population: 57m [almost the same as the United Kingdom]
Size: 301,268 sq km [20% larger than the UK]
Prime Minister: Silvio Berlusconi
Major exports: Clothing, shoes, cars, fruit and vegetables

FLAG FACT

The Italian flag was actually designed by a Frenchmen ... Napoleon Bonaparte. The 18th century emperor based it on the red, white and blue stripes of the French flag but swapped the blue for his favourite colour, green.

ROMAN RELICS



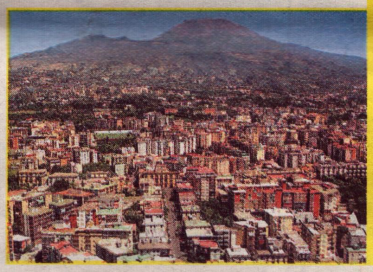
From 275BC to AD476, Italy was ruled by the Romans and was at the heart of their mighty empire. Archaeologists have unearthed spectacular Roman remains all over the country. These include a magnificent amphitheatre known as the Colosseum in Rome [right] where gladiators once fought to the death. Near the city of Naples, an entire Roman town called Pompeii has been discovered. It was buried under a mountain of ash when Mount Vesuvius [see below] erupted in AD79, preserving everything in almost perfect condition.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Italy is called Italia by its people, meaning "land of oxen" in latin. The name was the Roman term for the southern half of the country, which was good for grazing cattle.

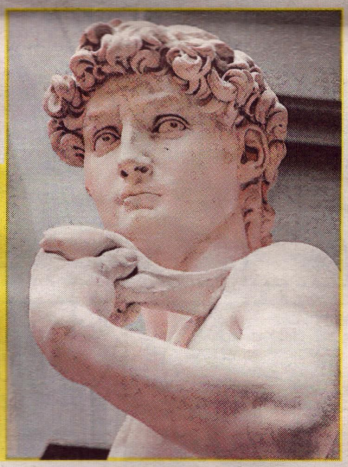
MOUNTAINS OF FUN

There are two major mountain ranges in Italy – the Alps and the Apennines. The Alps lie between Italy and its neighbours, France, Switzerland and Austria. They are the highest mountains in Europe and every winter thousands of people flock to their slopes to go skiing. The Apennines run down the entire length of the country. This range is much lower than the Alps but includes another popular tourist attraction, Vesuvius [left] – one of the most notorious and potentially lethal volcanoes on Earth.



AWESOME ART

Many of history's greatest artists were Italian, including Leonardo da Vinci, and on a visit to Italy you can see many of the world's most famous works of art. Italy's best known gallery is the Uffizi in Florence, which is the oldest art gallery in the world. The city is also home to this famous statue called David by Michelangelo ... another great Italian artist!



ON THE MENU

Italians take great pride in their cooking and famous Italian dishes include pizza and pasta. Here's a recipe for the classic Italian snack, bruschetta [pronounced broo-SKETT-ah]. You can get everything you need from your local supermarket – so have a go and give yourself a real taste of Italy!

Ingredients: • two thick slices of ciabatta – traditional Italian bread • olive oil • one clove of garlic cut in half • two chopped ripe tomatoes • two chopped basil leaves

Gently toast the ciabatta under the grill then rub each slice with the garlic. Pile on the chopped tomato and basil leaves and drizzle a little olive oil over the top. Grill for two minutes. Fantastico!

WATER WORLD

Venice is one of Italy's most famous cities. It is built on more than 100 small islands just off the Adriatic coast. Instead of roads, central Venice has a network of canals and people travel around the city by boat. A Venetian water bus is called a vaporetto.

We hope you enjoyed your trip to Italy. Next week, we're off to Greece!

PICTURES: REUTERS/MARIO LAPORTA, AP/FABRIZIO GIOVANNOZZI, PA, ©JOHN SIMS/ANTHONY BLAKE PHOTO LIBRARY

Prepare for another flight on Funday Air next week!

Story: Barry Dutter/Bill Morrison Art: Jerry Steffen/Mike Rote

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